NY Times, 15 Sep 67

Approved For Release 2006/01/30 : CIA-RDP70B00338R000300100113-9

MISSILE DEFENSE IS URGED BY NIXON

Says U.S. Should Counter Soviet 'at All Costs'

Former Vice Presidet Richard M. Nixon said today that the United States should "go ahead at all costs" to build an antimissile system to counter what he called the growing Soviet missile strength and a possible threat from Communist China.

Mr. Nixon said in an interview with The Associated Press that the Soviet Union was rapidly closing the missile gap. He said some intelligence sources had told him that the Russians were already ahead in explosive power.

The Soviet Union, Mr. Nixon said, has pushed ahead with construction of an antimissile system, although the United States, he contended, still maintained a 2-to-1 lead in the number of operational missiles.

Mr. Nixon recalled that President Kennedy had successfully used allegations of a missile gap against him in their race for the Presidency. The former Republican nominee commented:

"This 1960 issue can now be turned on the Administration: it's a deadly boomerang."

"We can't risk the Soviet Union gaining parity or superiority," he added, "since parity would be the same as superiority for they'd have the advantage of striking first."

Wants Constant Lead

Mr. Nixon, a leading contender for the 1968 Republican nomination, said, "We must never be in a position where we, who are for peace, are not ahead of the Soviet Union, whose only goal is victory."

"I wouldn't want to see another Cuba or Middle East crisis with the Soviet Union superior," he said. "Therefore, the United States must go ahead at all costs to build an antimissile missile system until there is a satisfactory agreement."

Mr. Nixon noted that many experts argue that a United States antimissile system and a Soviet system would merely be an expensive way of balancing each other out.

But, he said, even if this proved true there would still remain the problem of Communist China, which already has nuclear arms and is developing intercontinental ballistic missiles.

"Even if the antimissile missile system should not be 100 per cent effective against a highly sophisticated nuclear power," he said, "the consensus of the experts is that it would be effective against a less-developed one."

Soviet Reported Gaining

Special to The New York Times

LONDON, Sept. 14—The Institute for Strategic Studies said today the United States was way ahead of the Soviet Union in missiles, but that the Russians were closing the gap.

The institute reported that the number of Soviet land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles increased by about 50 per cent within the last year to 460 and that the number deployed would rise to about 550 by mid-1968. It said that the United States had 1,054 Minuteman and Titan I.C.B.M's.

In fleet ballistic missiles, the Russian progress was reported slower. The United States, with about 650 Polaris missiles, was said to hold a 5-to-1 lead.

The institute, with headquarters here, issues a report called "The Military Balance" every year. It provides a rundown of the military strength of all nations.

In discussing Soviet and United States missile strength, the institute noted that the Soviet intercontinental missiles had on the average "more destructive" warheads than their American counterparts.

"However," it continued, "the operation of a smaller warhead often indicates greater potential accuracy in delivery, and the United States has up till now, shown greater evidence of successful testing and firing of ballistic missiles."

The survey said that the deployment of a limited ballistic defense system around Moscow had increased protection of Soviet land-based I.C.B.M.'s.

It added that the new Soviet defense system now being installed along the eastern Baltic coast — the so-called Tallin Line — might be primarily an extension of radar coverage.

In discussing other areas, the institute said that there has been a "probable reduction in the combat effectiveness" of the Chinese armed forces because of the domestic upheaval.

It said that Communist regular and irregular forces in South Vietnam totaled about 295,000 in July, including 55,000 North Vietnamese regular troops. United States forces lost more than 2,400 aircraft in five years in Vietnam military operations, the institue said.

An accurate estimate of military casualties in the Arab-Israeli was was impossible to get, the institute said.

U.S Missile Controversy

The Johnson Administration has opposed full-scale deployment of antiballistic missiles, arguing that such a system would cost too much, escalate the arms race and be ineffective. It has been seeking agreement with the Soviet Union not to deploy antiballistic missiles. But the Administration has also set aside funds to begin building a limited "screen" of missiles if these talks fail.

Approved For Release 2006/01/30 : CIA-RDP70B00338R000300100113-9